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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BERNARD SANDERS, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Rev. Dennis Ellisen, of Our Saviour's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Appleton, WI.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

As we join together, confident in the gracious mercy of God, let us pray for the world and all who yearn for wholeness of life.

Dear Lord, we pray for our Senators and all leaders of our States, cities, and towns, and we pray that the world's distressed and downtrodden and most unfortunate not be neglected.

We pray for peace and reconciliation among all nations and for those leaders who govern and guide, so that ruthless and unjust ways be ended.

We pray for Your wisdom to make us caretakers of all that You have created. Empower our leaders to use their talents, interests, and abilities to restore the Earth to all its fullness, so that Your creation might be renewed.

We pray for Your Spirit to rest upon all the leaders of this great Nation, that in the midst of tremendous responsibility, they feel Your comfort and assurance that You are with them, guiding and encouraging their actions. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BERNARD SANDERS led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 18, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BERNARD SANDERS, a Senator from the State of Vermont, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SANDERS thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour. The Republicans will control the first half of time. We will control the second half of time. Following this period of morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Labor, HHS appropriations bill. Senator HARKIN and the ranking member, Senator SPECTER, will be here to move forward on this bill. If people have amendments, I hope they would do more than just think about them, that they would come and offer them and debate them. A lot of work remains to be done on this bill and other measures that require the attention of the Senate.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2179, S. 2180, S. 2184, S. 2185, H.R. 2102, AND H.R. 3678

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is my understanding we have six bills at the desk due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the titles of the bills for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2179) to authorize certain programs and activities in the Forest Service, the Department of the Interior, and the Department of Energy, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 2180) to authorize certain programs and activities in the Department of the Interior, the Forest Service, and the Department of Energy, and to amend the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 2184) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently allow penalty-free withdrawals from retirement plans for individuals called to active duty for at least 179 days.

A bill (S. 2185) to permanently extend the current marginal tax rates.

A bill (H.R. 2102) to maintain the free flow of information to the public by providing conditions for the federally compelled disclosure of information by certain persons connected with the news media.

A bill (H.R. 3678) to amend the Internet Tax Freedom Act to extend the moratorium on certain taxes relating to the Internet and to electronic commerce.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to further proceedings with respect to these bills en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The bills will be placed on the calendar.

The Senator from Wisconsin.

WELCOMING THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, today, I rise to welcome Rev. Dennis Ellisen to the Senate and to thank him for this morning's heartfelt and timely prayer.

Reverend Ellisen is the senior pastor at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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